



Stephens City Newsletter

VOLUME 29, ISSUE 6

NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 2010

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Stephens City Newsletter is published by the Town Government of Stephens City for its citizens, to inform, to apprise, and to clarify the issues and undertakings before the Town Government. Citizen feedback is encouraged. Contact the Town Office at 1033 Locust Street weekdays between the hours of 8:30a.m. and 5:00 p.m. or by mail: P.O. Box 250, Stephens City, VA 22655

Phone: 869-3087 **Fax:** 869-6166 **Police:** 868-1012 **Website:** www.stephenscity.vi.virginia.gov

3rd Annual CHRISTMAS ON THE COMMONS

SPONSORED BY THE STEPHENS CITY BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2010
3:30PM TO 6:00PM
AT NEWTOWN COMMONS
ON MAIN STREET IN STEPHENS CITY

This is a social celebration for children 5th grade and below, their families and friends

Come One, Come All!

Ornament Decorating for
Kids

A Critter Christmas Tree

Christmas Music by both the
Sherando Band and Aylor
Band

Free fresh baked goodies
and seasonal beverages by
Aunt B's and Bridget's
Baking

Stephens City Christmas Tree Lighting
Ceremony

Printing Courtesy of Commercial Press

TOWN OFFICE

CLOSED

on the Following Dates:

Thursday,

November 11, 2010

Veterans Day

Thursday and Friday,

November 25 & 26

Thanksgiving Holiday

Friday,

December 24, 2010

Christmas

December 31, 2010

News Years

Will re-open on next

Business Day at

at 8:30am



November and December are filled with such wonderful times to spend with your family and friends.

From all of the Council and Town Staff, we wish you all the most joyous Holiday Season.

Why did I get Another Tax Bill this Month?

Currently, the Town of Stephens City sends out tax bills twice a year. The first bill you received was due in June and was for half of the amount of tax you owe and for the decals for your motor vehicles or trailers. The bill you got this month is for the second half of what you owe for this year. You did not get billed for town decals as you have already paid for them. Please read your tax bills carefully. If there is a prior balance unpaid, you will need to add that amount to the current tax due in order to be in compliance (Please refer to example). Remember, interest is added each month to unpaid tax bills and leaves you open for DMV stops and liens against your property!

The Town of Stephens City is a non-prorating jurisdiction. That is to say, any property you own on January 1st of each year is taxed. If you should acquire other property on any other day of the year, you will not be taxed on it until the following tax year. Likewise, if you move or dispose of your property (real estate, vehicles, etc.) throughout the year, you still owe the entire year's tax to the Town.

The value of the property – both real and personal – is set by the Commissioner of Revenue, Frederick County. Based upon the value her office assesses, Stephens City applies the tax rate and that is how we arrive at the amount of tax you owe.

For Frequently Asked Questions concerning reassessment of values, please see this web site:

http://taxes.co.frederick.va.us/comm_rev/re_reassessment_faq.aspx

Town Treasurer,
Kim Uttenweiler

Sample Tax Bill

ITEM NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	EXEMPT VALUE	TAXABLE VALUE	PROPERTY OWNER
1	2009 KIA NISSAN	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	JOHN DOE
2	2009 KIA NISSAN	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	JOHN DOE
3	2009 KIA NISSAN	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	JOHN DOE
4	2009 KIA NISSAN	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	JOHN DOE
5	2009 KIA NISSAN	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	JOHN DOE
6	2009 KIA NISSAN	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	JOHN DOE
7	2009 KIA NISSAN	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	JOHN DOE
8	2009 KIA NISSAN	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	JOHN DOE
9	2009 KIA NISSAN	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	JOHN DOE
10	2009 KIA NISSAN	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	JOHN DOE
11	2009 KIA NISSAN	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	JOHN DOE
12	2009 KIA NISSAN	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	JOHN DOE
13	2009 KIA NISSAN	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	JOHN DOE
14	2009 KIA NISSAN	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	JOHN DOE
15	2009 KIA NISSAN	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	JOHN DOE
16	2009 KIA NISSAN	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	JOHN DOE
17	2009 KIA NISSAN	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	JOHN DOE
18	2009 KIA NISSAN	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	JOHN DOE
19	2009 KIA NISSAN	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	JOHN DOE
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24	2009 KIA NISSAN	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	JOHN DOE
25	2009 KIA NISSAN	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	JOHN DOE
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27	2009 KIA NISSAN	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	JOHN DOE
28	2009 KIA NISSAN	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	JOHN DOE
29	2009 KIA NISSAN	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	JOHN DOE
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99	2009 KIA NISSAN	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	JOHN DOE
100	2009 KIA NISSAN	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	JOHN DOE

Did you hear about the Town providing leaf collection throughout November?

Throughout the month of November, the Town will provide leaf collection.

Please place leaves in either garbage or paper bags at the curb where you leave trash on Monday mornings by 8:30am.

Your leaves must be bagged! Piles will not be picked up.

The Town will be by to pick up the leaves sometime Monday or Tuesday at the latest (dependent upon schedule and weather).

Water and Sewer Billing

Water and sewer bills for the bi-monthly billing end **Thursday, October 28, 2010** and are due upon receipt.

After **December 6, 2010** a **10% penalty** will be added. On Monday, **December 13, 2010** service will be discontinued for delinquency. A reconnect fee of **\$25** plus the full

amount of the bill must be paid before service can be restored.

Just a reminder that for your convenience a night drop is available at the Town Office for dropping off check or money order payments and payments can now be made online at the Town's website. Water/Sewer bills can be paid using a Visa or MasterCard. If you pay a

bill online after the due date, you will still be responsible for the 10% penalty and if the bill is paid after the shut off date, the \$25 reconnect fee will need to be paid as well, prior to reconnection.

Reminder:

DO NOT PUT CASH IN THE DROP BOX!

From the Town Manager's Desk...

Common Questions about Water/ Sewer Service in Stephens City:

Q. Can you help me determine if I have a leak?

A. Yes, we can help determine whether you might have a leak. We just can't fix it for you. Call us to set up a leak check appointment.

Q. What is the policy on water service leaks?

A. If a customer finds a leak in the water lines between the meter and the house, after the repair and written notification, the Town may adjust the customer's bill by removing the charges for sewer lost by the leak. The Town will have the final determination as to the amount of water lost by the leak. Bills will not be adjusted for more than two billing periods.

Q. Can you recommend a plumber?

A. We do not endorse any particular plumber. We recommend that you select a plumber by checking references, comparing prices and using information available from customer affairs organizations.

Q. Why is my water milky or cloudy? Is it safe to drink and use?

A. If your tap water appears milky or cloudy, it is usually an indication of air in the system. This just means that somewhere in your area, we are flushing the system or a new line is being installed. Water mains are flushed by opening fire hydrants and allowing them to flow freely for a short period of time. The flushing cleans out sediment, which accumulates normally in the water mains. Another cause of air in the system is cold weather. Your water is still safe to drink and use. Allowing the water to stand for a minute will help clear it.

Q. Why does my water smell like chlorine?

A. Chlorine is used to disinfect your water. A slight taste of chlorine is a good thing- it means that likely no bacteria are alive in your water. You may notice a more intense chlorine taste and odor in your water when we

flush the lines in the spring. This is because during flushing we use a stronger form of chlorine. Keeping an open container of water in the refrigerator for drinking helps dissipate strong chlorine taste and odor.

Q. What causes the periodic spikes in my water bill?

A. Outdoor leaks are often the culprit for large, one time spikes in your bill. Silent toilet leaks are another common leak.

Q. Under what conditions would my water be turned off?

A. Occasionally, your service may be interrupted due to a water main break, a power outage or during long periods of freezing temperatures when meters freeze. Please call the Town Office if you are without water or call the Emergency Services Dispatch after office hours.

Q. What is the policy on sewer stoppages?

A. In the event of a sewer stoppage, the customer should notify the Town Office. The Town will check its mains or in the lateral. Should the stoppage be in the sewer main, the Town will clear the stoppage as quickly as possible. If the stoppage is in the service lateral, the customer will be notified and will be responsible for the clearing of the stoppage.

Q. Should I have Sewer Backup Insurance?

A. Your house may be susceptible to flooding by the backup of sewage, especially if plumbing fixtures are located below ground. You can obtain insurance coverage for losses of this type. State laws requires that backup and overflow coverage be provided as an optional add-on to your homeowner's policy. Upon request, personnel will assist in determining if your dwelling is subject to this type of flooding. The Town is not responsible for any loss caused by the backup of sewage unless it is determined such loss was caused by the negligence of the Town.

Town Calendar of Events

NOVEMBER

Nov. 2 **Town Council at 7:30pm**
 Nov. 4 Dr. Peter B. Stickley Foundation 7:30pm
 Nov. 9 Personnel Committee meeting at 5:00pm
 Nov. 11 **Town Office Closed**
 Veterans Day
 Nov. 16 Historic Preservation Commission
 at 5:00pm
 Nov. 18 Water/ Sewer meeting at 5:30 pm
 Public Works meeting at 6:00 pm
 Nov. 22 Parks and Recreation Committee at 7:30pm
 Nov. 24 Finance Committee at 5:00pm
 Nov. 25 **Happy Thanksgiving!**
 Nov. 26 **Town Office Closed**
 Nov. 30 **Planning Commission at 7:30pm**

We're on the web!
www.stephenscity.vi.virginia.gov

DECEMBER

Dec. 2 Dr. Peter B. Stickley Foundation -7:30pm
 Dec. 6 **Water/Sewer Bills Due without penalty**
Penalties added to Water/Sewer Bills
 Dec. 7 **Town Council Meeting at 7:30pm.**
 Dec. 13 **Water Shut Off Date**
 Dec. 14 Personnel Committee at 5:00pm
 Dec. 16 Water/ Sewer Meeting at 5:30pm
 Public Works Meeting at 6:00pm
 Newtown Heritage Festival Mtg. at 7:00pm
 Dec. 21 Historic Preservation Committee at 5:00pm
 Dec. 22 Finance Committee at 5:00pm
 Dec. 24 **Town Office Closed- Christmas Eve**
 Dec. 25 **Merry Christmas**
 Dec. 27 Parks & Recreation Commission at 7:30pm
 Dec. 28 **Planning Commission at 7:30pm**
 Dec. 31 **Town Office Closed—New Years Eve**

** All meetings subject to change without notice w/ the exception of the Town Council meeting.*

From the Mayor's Office...

Hello Citizens.

Several months have slipped by since coming to my new office. It is my belief that things have continued to run smoothly. The Town staff has been busy working on several major projects such as water and sewer upgrades, the North Main Street Enhancement Project, replacing the windows at the Old School and trying to locate the source of the "cleaning towels" within the sewer system. If this pollution doesn't stop, it could cost the Town quite a bit of money to install screens and additional labor, which may result in an increase in rates.

I would like to extend a cordial invitation to all our citizens to attend our Council Meetings. They are held the first Tuesday of each month at 7:30pm. In all my years on council, it has been a disappointment to me that more citizens do not

attend our meeting and have not become more involved in the business of the Town. There is always a public comment period on the agenda that permits citizen input on any topic that you may want to address with the Council.

Finally, I just recently attended the Mayor's Institute and the VML Conference here in Virginia and found them very informative. Stephens City is doing great compared to some other localities in the state that are faced with budget constraints and internal conflict. We are fortunate to have good employees, dedicated Council and committee members who work well together for the Good of the Town.

Thank you for letting me serve you,

Until next time,

Mayor Joy Shull



SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2010

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Town's Water and Sewer Committee is reviewing fees and policies for water and sewer service.

A public hearing was held in October to increase deposits to \$200.00 but it has not been enacted pending the outcome of the policy.

If you're interested in this process, please plan on attending the upcoming Council Meetings.

Town Manager, Mike Kehoe